

**Southeast Iowa Regional Planning Commission
Full Board Minutes
211 N. Gear Avenue, West Burlington, IA 52655
May 22, 2025 Meeting**

Members Present: Jon Billups, Garry Seyb, Mark Huston, Steve Detrick, Jim Ferneau, Hans Trousil, Kevin Hardin, Kirk Miller, and Laura Liegois; Barb Smidt, and Chad Hudson via Zoom

Members Absent: Dr. Michael Ash, Jim Cary, Brent Schleisman, Brett Shafer, Cori Milan, and Ron Teater

Staff Present: Mike Norris, Zach James, Lori Gilpin, Pat Inrachavongsa, Sherri Jones, and Jarred Lassiter

Guests Present: Penny Vacek, Sen. Chuck Grassley, Michele Beck, Sen. Joni K. Ernst, John Kaufmann, Sen. Mariannette Miller-Meeks, and Jacob Nye, IBEW Local 13

Call to order at 12:03 p.m.

Agenda Approval

Motion by Seyb to approve the May 22, 2025 agenda, second by Billups. All Ayes, motion carried.

Consent Agenda Approval

Norris said that driveway bids were sent out and due back prior to the May board meeting. He reminded members that expenses over \$50,000 would have to be approved by the board of directors. He said staff has been working with Lee County Economic Development Group (LCEDG) on a large attraction project in Lee County. Road, rail, and natural gas infrastructure and local incentives are all areas of cooperative assistance provided by SEIRPC. He mentioned that Homes for Iowa has built and moved 124 homes since 2010. Southeast Iowa will have 14 HFI homes in the region by the end of 2025. Homes delivered to southeast Iowa in 2025 will include: Keokuk, Morning Sun, and rural Columbus City. Motion by Liegois to accept the May 22, 2025 consent agenda, second by Detrick. All Ayes, motion carried.

Old Business

1. Department Reports: Norris reviewed the status of housing department programs. He said SEIRPC is still looking for a home to rehab and encouraged board members to talk to staff with housing ideas for their communities. James said the Planning Department has hired Joseph Grabowski as Regional Planner and he will start on June 2, 2025. He earned his bachelor's and master's degrees from the University of Iowa and will be assisting in writing grant applications, grant administration, planning document preparation, and other duties as needed. He highlighted grant applications in development, submitted, recently funded, currently administered, and discussed upcoming grant opportunities. Inrachavongsa gave the following staff updates: Bill Kester has been hired as a Substitute Driver, Cass Lefler has been hired as part-time Scheduler, Debbie Blackledge has been promoted to Scheduler II, and Robin Pieper has been promoted to Assistant Transit Director. He mentioned potential transportation opportunities with Siemens, Cornerstone, Wal-Mart Distribution, and District 8 Correctional. No action necessary.
2. Public Hearing: Final Draft FY2026 Transportation Planning Work Program (TPWP): Resolution #190-2025: A Resolution Adopting the FY2026 Transportation Planning Work Program, Authorizing Filing of Grant Application and Execution of Grant Contracts Consistent with the Work Program; and Resolution #191-2025: A Resolution Assuring Local Match for FHWA STP, FHWA SPR and FTA5311 Funds: Huston opened the Public Hearing at 12:20 p.m. James stated that the Final Draft FY2026 TPWP contains the outline for work performed with federal transportation planning dollars for FY2026 and includes completing plans, technical assistance, grant writing, grant administration, project development, public

participation, and programmatic duties. James explained that out of the total Transportation Planning Budget of \$388,773 that the federal funding (80%) \$311,018 comes from FHWA SPR, FTA 5311, FHWA STBG C/O, and FHWA STBG; and that the total local match (20%) will be \$77,755. Some highlights of the FY2026 TPWP include: Review and maintain the region's Long Range Transportation Plan; Project assistance with regional passenger rail depots and freight rail development; Continued assistance with Southeast Iowa Regional Economic and Port Authority (SIREPA); Working with regional partners for bridge improvements and replacement; and Continue promotion of alternative transportation options and complete streets, etc. Huston asked for comments, and no further comments were made. Trousil made a motion to close the Public Hearing: Final Draft FY2026 Transportation Planning Work Program (TPWP): Resolution #190-2025: A Resolution Adopting the FY2026 Transportation Planning Work Program, Authorizing Filing of Grant Application and Execution of Grant Contracts Consistent with the Work Program; and Resolution #191-2025: A Resolution Assuring Local Match for FHWA STP, FHWA SPR and FTA5311 Funds at 12:25 p.m., second by Seyb. All Ayes, motion carried. Billups made a motion to approve both Resolution #190-2025: A Resolution Adopting the FY2026 Transportation Planning Work Program, Authorizing Filing of Grant Application and Execution of Grant Contracts Consistent with the Work Program, and Resolution #191-2025: A Resolution Assuring Local Match for FHWA STP, FHWA SPR and FTA5311 Funds, second by Liegois. A roll call vote was taken. All Ayes, motion carried.

New Business

1. Adoption of SEIRPC FY2026 Budget: Norris stated that the FY2026 Budget has been prepared and reviewed and was recommended by the Finance Committee to the SEIRPC full board for approval. He further stated that the planning assumptions include: Total FY2026 Revenues: \$3,433,798 and Total FY2026 Expenses: \$3,329,430. SEIRPC is anticipated to be in the black for FY2025 and FY2026. Staff levels are consistent with the amount of services provided. Management has worked to cross-train staff which makes SEIRPC more resilient and efficient to handle economic conditions while being responsive to the region. The budget was prepared on an aggregate 3% salary increase. The EDA grant remains at \$70,000. SEIRPC is always looking at new opportunities to serve Southeast Iowa. Some of those ideas include: Infill Housing Development, Employee transportation to work, Regional healthy living programs, Utility mapping and location, Impervious surfaces mapping, Drone photography and video, etc. Norris thanked Gilpin for her work on the budget. Miller made a motion based on the recommendation of the SEIRPC Finance Committee, to approve the SEIRPC FY2026 Budget as presented, second by Seyb. All Ayes, motion carried.
2. Draft FY2026 Transportation Improvement Program: James said the TIP includes all transportation projects that are receiving federal transportation dollars. If an entity has been awarded a federal transportation grant it must be in this document to be eligible to receive the funding. Each year SEIRPC solicits applications for STBG and TAP funding, with applications due in late January. After the deadline has passed, staff review and score the applications to determine which are most deserving of the available funds. For the objective criteria, STBG staff complete the scoring on their own. For the subjective criteria, staff are assisted by the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC). TAC holds a formal meeting at the SEIRPC office, open to the general public, where staff present the details of the individual projects. As an added measure to prevent bias, staff removes the highest and lowest scores for each project and takes an average of the remaining 7 members to get the final scores. The committee may choose to either discuss the results further and possibly make changes or recommend the final scores to the SEIRPC board. Lassiter discussed each project and their corresponding scores in detail because this was the first year after the board approved a new set of scoring criteria. He said that 5 City STBG applications were received of which City of Mediapolis – Main Street Improvements, Phase 4, ranked #1 with an anticipated award of \$1,343,643. Only one County STBG application was received from Des Moines County – Pleasant Grove Road PCC Reconstruction, which is anticipated to receive

\$1,642,230. Three TAP Projects were received of which City of Donnellson – Westview Park Trail – Phase II, is anticipated to receive \$322,000. The final draft will be presented for approval at the July Full Board meeting. No action necessary.

3. Public Hearing: SEIBUS Proposed Fare Increase: Resolution #193-2025 Approving Proposed SEIBUS Fare Increase: Huston opened the public hearing at 1:00 p.m. Inrachavongsa, SEIBUS Transit Director, stated that SEIBUS relies partially on passenger fares to pay for the cost of services. The last dated request to raise fares was in July 2006, due to escalating fuel prices at the time. More diverse funding sources and subsidy increases have meant SEIRPC has not had to increase fares in nearly 20 years. To fund the system in the face of future subsidy reductions and to address all areas of potential revenue, staff propose an increase from \$2.50/one-way ride to \$3.00 for the in-town fares starting July 1, 2025. Staff estimate a \$10,000 revenue increase. Huston asked for any comments from the public, and there were none. **Trousil made a motion to close the Public Hearing: SEIBUS Proposed Fare Increase: Resolution #193-2025 Approving Proposed SEIBUS Fare Increase from \$2.50/In-Town Ride to \$3.00/In-Town Ride at 1:08 p.m., second by Seyb.** All ayes, motion carried. **Liegeois made a motion to approve Resolution #193-2025 Approving Proposed SEIBUS Fare Increase from \$2.50/In-Town Ride to \$3.00/In-Town Ride, second by Miller.** A roll call vote was taken. All ayes, motion carried.
4. SEIRPC Member Services: Norris said SEIRPC exists to serve southeast Iowa through member services, program management, and technical assistance. Since 1973 the meaning and application of these areas has changed, and a number of direct member services have been added. He reviewed a list of direct services currently being administered to members which include: Rental inspections, Floodplain ordinance administration, Electrical inspections, Housing Trust Fund administration, Revolving Loan Fund management, and Planning, Zoning, Subdivision, and Wind/Solar Ordinance administration. He asked board members to let staff know if they can assist with any administration or management services. No action necessary.
5. RLF: Thyme & Spice: James said Ashlyn and Travis Long submitted an RLF application requesting funds for machinery and equipment, inventory, and working capital to expand their company, Thyme & Spice, Co. Inc. They opened the business in December of 2021 which is a modern version of a spice and tea shop offering over 350 spices, teas, herbs, and botanicals, along with a variety of cooking items and accessories. In addition, they offer a small lunch menu. This loan will help them relocate to 612 Jefferson Street allowing for a more visible location and twice as much space to expand their retail and eating options. The total estimated project cost of \$150,000 includes \$105,000 for building remodel, \$20,500 for machinery and equipment, \$7,000 for inventory, and \$17,500 for working capital. Two Rivers Bank and Trust will be loaning \$90,000 to be used for building renovations. The request to SEIRPC RLF is for \$45,000 to be used for machinery and equipment (\$20,500), inventory (\$7,000), and working capital (\$17,500). The applicant is contributing \$15,000 towards the cost of building renovations. Upon completion of renovations and purchases, the anticipated opening date at the new location will be February 2026. The project includes the 4 currently employed staff members and 6 new staff members. The SEIRPC Loan Review Committee met on May 21, 2025, and voted unanimously to recommend funding the request under the terms included in the motion. Trousil made a motion to approve the RLF application for Thyme & Spice, Co. Inc., in total loan amount of \$45,000 from EDA I; 5-year term; Interest Rate 4%; Collateral offered: Personal guaranty for Ashlyn and Travis Long, Corporate guaranty Thyme & Spice Co. Inc., General UCC filing, and 2nd position on the mortgage of their home located at 524 N Plane Street, Burlington, IA 52601 (Parcel #11-31-427-01), second by Seyb. All Ayes, motion carried.
6. Safe Streets 4 All Community Safety Action Plan: Resolution #194-2025: A Resolution Adopting the Comprehensive Safety Action Plan and Committing to the Goal of Eliminating Traffic Deaths and Serious Injuries by 2060 on Streets and Highways Within the Incorporated Cities in SEIRPC's Region, Comprising Lee, Des Moines, Henry, and Louisa Counties: James said staff completed a consultant selection process in December 2023, with the selected consultant of Stanley Consultants. A contract was prepared in early 2024 but has been on hold to determine how the local matching funds would be distributed through Iowa DOT. Based on the

process identified, we had to wait until the new fiscal year (FY2025) to approve the contract and start the project, which happened in July 2024. Starting in August 2024, Stanley Consultants held multiple Regional Safety Committee meetings, gathered public input via surveys and interviews, and completed a regional analysis to identify a high-injury crash network. This has led to a final Comprehensive Safety Action Plan that includes identified priority locations with proposed measures to make safety improvements. The resolution approving this plan is required for entities to be eligible to apply for implementation grants. Billups made a motion to approve Resolution #194-2025: A Resolution Adopting the Comprehensive Safety Action Plan and Committing to the Goal of Eliminating Traffic Deaths and Serious Injuries by 2060 on Streets and Highways Within the Incorporated Cities in SEIRPC's Region, Comprising Lee, Des Moines, Henry, and Louisa Counties, second by Seyb. A roll call vote was taken. All ayes, motion carried.

MATTERS FROM THE FLOOR:

None

Motion to adjourn meeting by Miller, second by Seyb. All Ayes

Meeting adjourned at 1:18 p.m.

Submitted by Sherri Jones

Mike Norris, Executive Director

Mark Huston, Secretary

Date: _____

Date: _____